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ABSTRACT

This document describes the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program (ACTAAP), which includes the Smart Start initiative for grades K through 4 and the Smart Step initiative for grades 5 through 8, as well as assessments for high schools. As it encourages educational improvement, the ACTAAP fulfills the requirements of various Arkansas statutes. The ACTAAP consists of four main components, each of which is described: (1) academic standards defining what students show know and be able to do; (2) professional development, planned research-based learning activities for teachers and administrators; (3) student assessment that includes criterion-referenced and norm-referenced tests; and (4) accountability through a comprehensive, focused process. Each public school in Arkansas will have a school performance report to provide parents and the public with data on which to evaluate their schools and provide benchmarks for measuring school improvement. This report also outlines the school improvement planning process, the rewards that recognize schools that demonstrate and maintain high performance, and the sanctions for low achievement. Accountability indicators and trend goals are also described. (SLD)

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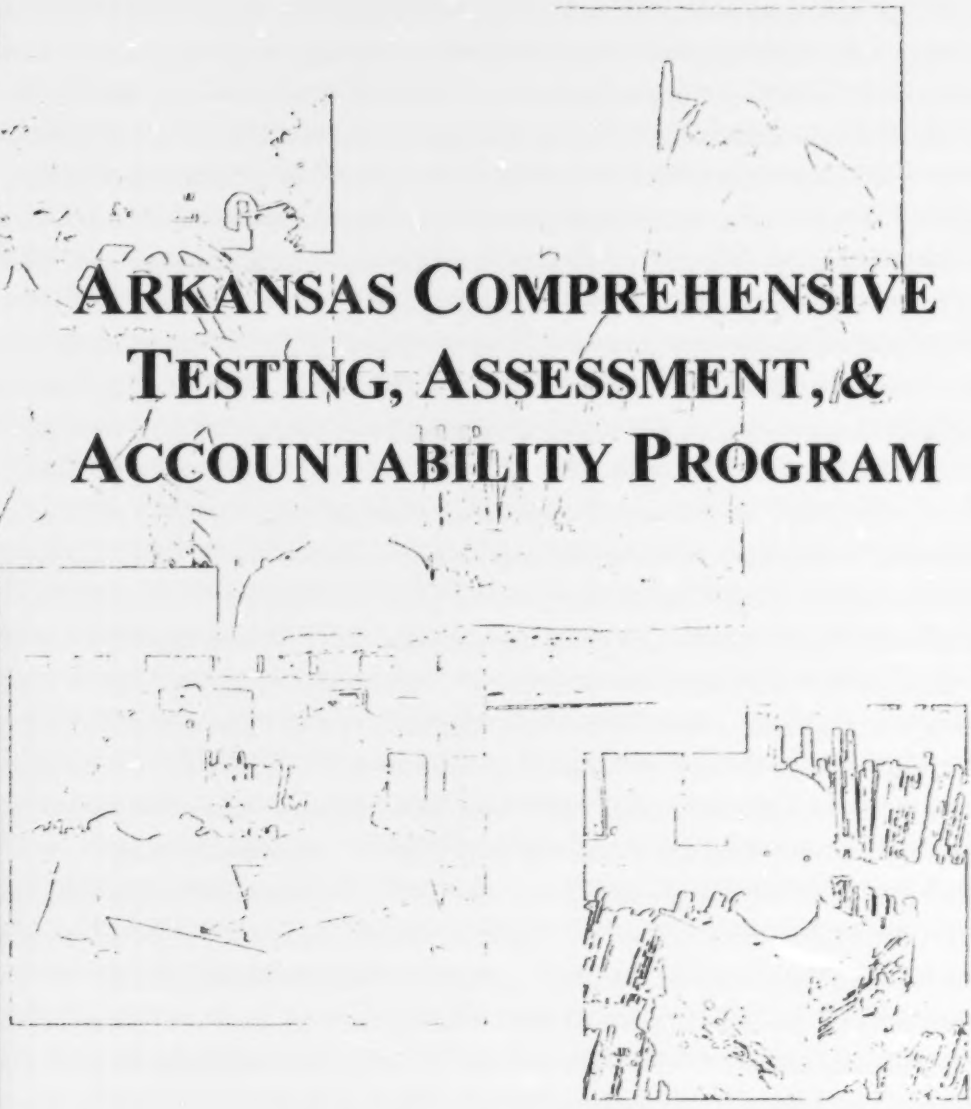
ARKANSAS COMPREHENSIVE TESTING, ASSESSMENT, & ACCOUNTABILITY PROGRAM



Arkansas Department of Education
Ray Simon, Director

June 1999
Revised June 2000

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INTRODUCTION

The Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program (ACTAAP), a comprehensive system encompassing high academic standards, professional development, student assessment, and accountability for schools and students, has the following purposes:

- To improve student learning and classroom instruction;
- To provide public accountability by establishing expected achievement levels and reporting on student achievement;
- To provide program evaluation data; and
- To assist policymakers in decision-making.

Based on principles of rigor, clarity, and fairness, ACTAAP makes student achievement of the academic standards the shared priority of all public schools, school districts, education service cooperatives, and the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE). It will result in improved teaching and learning. It will identify successful schools and programs and encourage replication of those successes. It will encourage individual schools and school districts to reflect on their practices, take corrective actions, and receive support from state agencies. Finally, it will fulfill the requirements of various Arkansas statutes, including Act 999 of 1999, which mandates "that all students in the public schools of this state demonstrate grade-level academic proficiency through the application of knowledge and skills in the core academic subjects consistent with state curriculum frameworks, performance standards, and assessments."

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

The first component, a set of clear, challenging **academic standards,** defines what students should know and be able to do in the basic academic core. Arkansas' academic standards are delineated in ten state curriculum framework documents. Written by Arkansas classroom teachers, the curriculum frameworks are revised on a State Board of Education adopted schedule to ensure that state learning expectations will prepare students to succeed in increasingly more demanding post secondary education and in an ever more competitive job market. As part of Smart Start and Smart Step, and as a support and supplement to the curriculum frameworks, K-8 Benchmark documents in Language Arts and Mathematics have been created. These documents are examples of how a school district might implement the curriculum frameworks by grade level. The K-8 Curriculum Model documents also contain suggested instructional strategies, classroom assessments, and a K-3 grade-level skills checklist. Other supportive curriculum documents built around the academic standards are under development.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The second component, **professional development**, is a coordinated set of planned, research-based best practice, learning activities for teachers and administrators which are standards-based and continuous. It shall be tied with school improvement planning and with licensure renewal requirements.

Thirty approved professional development hours annually will be required for each certified employee in the school district. Beginning in January 2002, thirty approved professional development hours annually over a five-year period shall be required to renew a teacher or administrator license. To be eligible, professional development activities must produce teaching and administrative knowledge and skills designed to improve students' academic performance. Such activities may include approved conferences, workshops, institutes, individual learning, mentoring, peer coaching, study groups, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification, distance learning, internships, and college/university coursework. Approved professional development activities shall relate to the twelve areas adopted by the State Board of Education: content (Grades K-12); instructional strategies; assessment; advocacy/leadership; systemic change process; standards, frameworks, and curriculum alignment; supervision; mentoring/coaching; instructional technology; principles of learning/developmental stages; cognitive research; and building a collaborative learning community. All approved professional development activities, whether individual or school wide, shall be based on the improvement of student achievement on state-mandated criterion-referenced examinations and other related indicators as defined by ACTAAP.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

The third component is a **student assessment** program, which includes both criterion-referenced and norm-referenced tests in the academic core.

> **Criterion-referenced tests** are customized around the academic standards in the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks and are developed by committees of Arkansas teachers. These criterion-referenced tests are administered to establish the level of student achievement of the state academic standards and to compare the level of student achievement with the expected performance levels set by the State Board of Education.
>
> **Norm-referenced tests** provide information to compare the performance of Arkansas students against the performance of a sample of students from across the country (norming/standardization group). Because norm-referenced tests are not built exclusively around Arkansas' academic standards and because their purpose is to group students based on their performance relative to the norming group, they can best be used for assisting in broad program evaluation and in individual student diagnosis. Norm-referenced test data will not be a primary state-mandated indicator within the accountability component, but will be reported annually on the School Performance Report.

State-Mandated Assessments

The results of all assessments should be used during the school improvement planning process to help the school focus on the Arkansas academic standards and the need to increase proficient student performance around those standards.

State-mandated assessments shall be as follows:

Assessments	Grade Level	Month Administered
Criterion-Referenced		
Primary Benchmark	Grade 4	April
Intermediate Benchmark	Grade 6	April
Middle Level Benchmark	Grade 8	April
End-of-Course – Algebra I	When Completed	January/May
End-of-Course – Geometry	When Completed	January/May
End-of-Course – Literacy	Grade 11	January/April
Norm-Referenced	Grades 5,7, and 10	September

The Primary, Intermediate, and Middle Level Benchmark Exams, as well as the End-of-Course Exams, will be given late in the school year to allow maximum instructional time for covering the academic standards. Special provisions will be made for an alternate administration in January for those secondary students on a block scheduling system. The Literacy End-of-Course Exam will be given to students in Grade 11 to allow time for additional remediation, at the school's option, before graduation. These exams are tailored to Arkansas' curriculum standards, and their performance levels are absolute and held constant over time. The results of the End-of-Course Exams shall become a part of each student's transcript or permanent record.

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An academic improvement plan means a plan which details supplemental and/or intervention and remedial instruction in deficient academic areas. One shall be developed for each student not performing at the proficient level in every portion of the criterion-referenced examinations.

The norm-referenced tests will be given in early fall of the school year in order to provide teachers with immediate and initial performance assessment data on students currently enrolled or newly enrolled in classes and content areas. The performance of Arkansas students taking the norm-referenced tests in the fall will be compared to the performance of a norming group who took the same tests during the same period in the fall, thus ensuring the reliability, validity and fairness of comparison. Score reports will be returned early in the school year for classroom teachers to use the testing information to address the individual student learning needs, and to modify the instructional program, teaching strategies, and/or classroom assessments as needed. Instruction then can focus fully on the Arkansas academic standards throughout the year and on increasing proficient student performance around those standards. Schools may request a waiver from the fall to a spring testing date. Such waivers will only be granted after a written plan is presented to the ADE and the school agrees to the guidelines as established. The timing of such requests must also fall within the deadlines as established by the testing company.

As another part of the student assessment program for Grades K-4, schools shall select performance assessments or screening/diagnostic tools to assess primary grade students. Any student in Grades K-4 failing to perform at the proficient level in reading and writing literacy or mathematics shall be evaluated as early as possible within each of the Grades K-4 academic years. Those students shall be evaluated by personnel with expertise in reading and writing literacy or mathematics who shall develop and implement an academic improvement plan, using ADE sanctioned early intervention strategies for Grades K-1 students and remediation strategies for Grades 2-4 students. These strategies should assist the students in achieving the expected standard.

Schools serving Grades 5-12 shall establish a plan to assess whether children are performing at the proficient level in order to help assure eventual success on every portion of the Intermediate, Middle Level, and End-of-Course Benchmark Exams.

For accountability purposes, no points will be assigned for the results of these performance assessments or screening/diagnostic tools.

Act 855 of 1999 mandates that students in Grades K-3 not performing at grade level during the regular school year shall participate in an ADE approved remediation program or a summer school remediation program to be eligible for promotion to the next grade. Those schools electing not to offer a summer school program shall offer an ADE approved remediation program during the regular school year to students in Grades K-3 not performing at grade level.

Optional Assessments

There are other assessments which are optional for student and school participation. These include the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), college entrance examinations (e.g., ACT and SAT), Advanced Placement testing, PLAN, EXPLORE, and others. Some of these may be included as indicators on the School Performance Report or in the annual school report to the public.

Note: Although NAEP is optional for individual school districts, state participation is mandated by Act 999 of 1999.

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS

Accountability is a comprehensive, focused process designed to improve student learning. It is a shared responsibility of the state, school, district, public officials, educators, parents, and students.

The ACTAAP accountability model focuses on each individual school and is constructed around a **three-tiered system** that includes statewide indicators, individual school improvement indicators, and a locally-generated school accountability narrative. Once appropriate time has elapsed to evaluate trends and improvement expectations in a sufficient number of indicators and a statistically-defensible point assignment system can be developed, points for each of the statewide and individual school improvement indicators will be given. This point system will form the basis for rewards and sanctions.

These three tiers allow for meaningful and appropriate state and local involvement to implement accountability within clearly articulated parameters. ACTAAP encourages proactive corrections by individual schools and their local districts through the development and application of strategies using the school improvement process as a planning instrument.

Performance Levels

The primary goal of the accountability system is to assure that all students achieve grade-level performance. In this system, grade-level performance is defined as performing at the proficient or advanced level on state-mandated criterion-referenced tests. Four performance levels have been established for these exams: advanced, proficient, basic and below basic. The only tests for which scaled scores defining these levels have been set are the Primary Benchmark and Middle Level Benchmark Exams. Similar scales will be established by the State Board of Education as additional tests are completed and data become available.

Definitions of Performance Levels

Advanced students demonstrate superior performance well beyond proficient grade-level performance. They can apply Arkansas' established reading, writing, and mathematics skills to solve complex problems and complete demanding tasks on their own. They can make insightful connections between abstract and concrete ideas and provide well-supported explanations and arguments.

Proficient students demonstrate solid academic performance for the grade tested and are well-prepared for the next level of schooling. They can use Arkansas' established reading, writing, and mathematics skills and knowledge to solve problems and complete tasks on their own. Students can tie ideas together and explain the ways their ideas are connected.

Basic students demonstrate a need for some additional assistance, commitment, or study to reach the proficient level. They show substantial skills in reading, writing, and mathematics; however, they only partially demonstrate the abilities to apply these skills.

Below Basic students fail to show sufficient mastering of skills in reading, writing, and mathematics to attain the basic level.

Performance Levels for the Primary and Middle Level Benchmark Examinations*

Performance Level	Scaled Score Ranges for Performance Levels for Mathematics		Scaled Score Ranges for Performance Levels for Literacy	
	Primary	Middle Level	Primary	Middle Level
Advanced	250 and above	250 and above	250 and above	250 and above
Proficient	200-249	200-249	200-249	200-249
Basic	155-199	149-199	179-199	164-199
Below Basic	154 and below	148 and below	178 and below	163 and below

*(*Performance is subject to adjustment on a periodic basis due to statistical scaling and variability in the test.)*

Public Reporting

Each public school in Arkansas will have a **School Performance Report** that will be created through the combined efforts of the local school, school district, and the ADE. The School Performance Report will provide parents and the public with data upon which to evaluate their schools and provide benchmarks for measuring school improvement. Although results from the school's performance on the three-tiered system will be the primary focus of the School Performance Report, other indicators may be included as determined by law or State Board of Education rules and regulations.

Although the same standards of student performance will be expected from all students, assessment data will be analyzed and reported separately for three student classifications: special education, limited English proficient, and high mobility. The purposes for tracking performance of these student groups are to focus on narrowing any achievement gap between them and their peers and to ensure that the progress of all student populations is annually and systematically monitored. For purposes of this reporting, the following definitions apply:

Disaggregated Reporting

General population students are those participating in the mandatory criterion-referenced and norm-referenced assessments that are not classified as special education, limited English proficient, or highly mobile.

Combined population students include all those participating in the mandatory criterion-referenced and norm-referenced assessments regardless of classification.

Special education students are those determined to be eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and who have an individualized education program (IEP). The student's IEP must stipulate that the student may participate in the mandatory criterion-referenced and norm-referenced assessments either with or without accommodations. Beginning July 1, 2000, those unable to participate with or without accommodations will be assessed through the Alternate Assessment program.

Beginning with the kindergarten class of 2000-2001, the scores of all students classified as special education students participating in the mandatory criterion-referenced and norm-referenced assessments with or without accommodations shall be aggregated (combined) with those of the general population students according to the following calendar:

2004 – 05	Primary Benchmark
2005 – 06	Fifth Grade Norm-Referenced
2006 – 07	Intermediate Benchmark
2007 – 08	Seventh Grade Norm-Referenced
2008 – 09	Middle Level Benchmark
2008 – 09	End of Course (where applicable)
2010 – 11	Tenth Grade Norm-Referenced
2011 – 12	End of Course Literacy

Limited English proficient students are those having a language background other than English and whose proficiency in English is such that the probability of academic success in an English-only classroom is below that of native English language students. The district's Language Assessment Committee must have determined that the students may participate in the mandatory criterion-referenced and norm-referenced assessments either with or without accommodations. Beginning July 1, 2000, those unable to participate with or without accommodations will be assessed through the Alternate Assessment program.

High mobility students are those who, at the time of spring testing, were not enrolled in the current ***school district*** on October 1 of the current school year or who, at the time of fall testing, were not enrolled in the current ***school district*** on October 1 of the previous school year.

Beginning with the 1999-2000 mandatory assessments, results will be reported separately for the following categories of students:

General Population
Special Education Students
Limited English Proficient Students
High Mobility Students
Combined Population

Beginning with the 2000-01 mandatory assessments, the number of students not tested through either the mandatory criterion-referenced and norm-referenced assessments or Alternate Assessment program will be reported by school. Schools should make every effort to assure that all students are tested.

Annual School Report to the Public: Each year, each school will prepare a report to the parents and community. This report will include a narrative description (such as prepared under Tier III indicators) that will highlight the school's improvement plan and indicate progress made in implementing the performance indicators within that plan.

Arkansas School Information Site (AS-IS): The ADE plans to make school accountability data available statewide through the Department's World Wide Web – as-is.org. This Web site will display school data based on student performance and other selected indicators.

Annual ADE Report to the Legislature: The ADE shall report to the members of the House and Senate Interim Committees on Education on the progress of ACTAAP. The report shall be due on September 1, 1999 and annually thereafter.

School Improvement Planning

As part of the state's accreditation process, each school is required to engage in the development and implementation of a **school improvement plan** based on priorities indicated by student assessment and other pertinent data. This plan is designed to ensure that all students demonstrate proficiency on all portions of the state-mandated criterion-referenced exams. The initial step in the planning model is a structured process that leads to disaggregation of student achievement and other student data. The study of this data helps schools identify areas within the curriculum where student performance does not meet expectation.

Schools prioritize the needs areas, then develop performance-based benchmarks that can be tracked during the implementation phase of the plan. Schools then identify intervention and remediation strategies that, if effectively implemented, will move students toward meeting the established benchmarks. Finally, schools develop an action plan that assigns tasks, identifies resources (including the source of funds), and projects evaluation strategies that will signal movement toward meeting the performance standards. The process requires that the intervention and remediation be research-based and linked to proven practices.

Rewards

Rewards will be based on a system structured to recognize schools that demonstrate and maintain high performance over time and to recognize schools that demonstrate growth on both the state-mandated and school-selected indicators. Rewards also can be used to highlight individual schools so that their practices can be adapted in other schools and districts across the state.

Each year the ADE will recognize individual schools that demonstrate exceptional performance in two categories:

> **Performance Awards** - Absolute levels of student achievement and other indicators.
>
> **Growth Trend and Improvement Awards** – Recognized growth trends and improvement in student achievement and other indicators.

All award categories, which could include cash payments to individual schools, will be phased in over time and will be implemented as the indicator performance levels are established through the standard setting process.

The focus of any cash awards must be to enhance the capability of the school to better serve its students. Awarded funds shall be used to expand programs, provide additional materials and supplies, support technology, provide bonuses to staff, or make possible other enhancements that serve the needs of the school or children.

Sanctions

Sanctions are applied for the purpose of improving teaching and learning, not for punishing schools or the people in them. Intervention from the state is not meant to be a permanent solution to unacceptable student achievement, but a way to help local schools improve student performance. It is expected that individual schools and districts will monitor their own progress and take corrective steps to improve student achievement prior to intervention from the state.

To avoid sanctions, each school is expected to achieve annually a minimum percentage of its total possible points given for the accountability indicators described within the three-tiered system. Failure to do so will result in the following designations:

- **High Priority Status** – first year.
- **Alert Status** – second year.
- **Low Performing Status** – third year.
- **Academic Distress Phase I Status** – fourth year.

To be considered for removal from any sanctioned designation leading up to, but not including, Academic Distress Phase I, a school must attain the minimum percentage of its total possible points for two consecutive years. Once classified as Academic Distress Phase I, a school must comply with rules and regulations to be promulgated by the ADE in order to be removed from this category. Failure to do so will result in the school's designation as **Academic Distress Phase II** and/or **Academic Distress Phase III**.

The ADE reserves the right, for any school in any of the designations above, to mandate a specified intensive intervention plan which could include, but not be limited to, specific one-year goals in curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development. This plan could also include a mandated summer school program for students performing below grade level.

Current rules and regulations governing schools in Academic Distress will remain in effect until the ACTAAP system described here is fully operational.

Accountability Indicators

Definitions of the non-academic (learning environment) indicators are provided later in this document.

Tier I Indicators, all state-mandated, are based on performance goals and apply to every school in the state, where appropriate, by grade level configuration. They are as follows:

Indicator	Goal (Definition)	Grade Level(s)
Performance on State-Mandated Criterion-Referenced Tests	100% of a school's students shall perform at or above the "proficient" level in reading and writing literacy. 100% of a school's students shall perform at or above the "proficient" level in mathematics.	4th, 6th, and 8th
Performance on State-Mandated Criterion-Referenced Tests	100% of a school's secondary students shall perform at or above the "proficient" level in Algebra I. 100% of a school's secondary students shall perform at or above the "proficient" level in Geometry. 100% of a school's secondary students shall perform at or above the "proficient" level in Literacy.	Secondary
School Drop Out	At least 99% of secondary students will remain in school to complete the 12th grade.	7th through 12th
Average Daily Attendance	Average daily attendance rate will be at least 95%.	Kindergarten through 12th
Classes Taught by an Appropriately Licensed Teacher	100% of a school's classes will be taught by an appropriately licensed teacher.	Kindergarten through 12th
Professional Development	100% of a school's certified staff will complete at least 30 hours of approved professional development annually.	Kindergarten through 12th
School Safety	Schools will be free of drugs, weapons, and violent acts.	Kindergarten through 12th

Note: For purposes of assigning points for criterion-referenced tests under the Tier I accountability component, only the performance of general population students shall be measured.

Tier II Indicators are based on trend and improvement goals on state-mandated criterion-referenced tests and on school-selected indicators. Any "Other School Selected Indicators" must have prior approval of the ADE.

Trend goals will be established for ***different*** cohorts of students using cross-sectional data from the same indicator (e.g. Primary Benchmark Exam). Statistical techniques will be developed, by averaging multiple years of data, to minimize the inherent volatility associated with the natural variation in performance of these different groups. This means that if a school is continuing to improve, the trend will be a consistent indicator that fewer students are below proficient, with the effect of "off-year" or "good-year" performance minimized.

Improvement goals will be established for the ***same*** cohort of students using a longitudinal database. As students progress from grade to grade, data will be maintained and constantly updated.

Tier II – State-Mandated Indicators

Indicator	Goal (Definition)	Grade Level(s)
Performance on State-Mandated Criterion-Referenced Tests	The percent of students performing at or above the "proficient" level in reading and writing literacy on the criterion-referenced tests will meet or exceed the trend and improvement goals each year. - The percent of students performing at or above the "proficient" level in mathematics on the criterion-referenced tests will meet or exceed the trend and improvement goals each year.	4^{th}, 6^{th}, and 8^{th}
Performance on State-Mandated Criterion-Referenced Tests	The percent of secondary students performing at or above the "proficient" level in Algebra I will meet or exceed the trend goal each year. The percent of secondary students performing at or above the "proficient" level in Geometry will meet or exceed the trend goal each year. The percent of secondary students performing at or above the "proficient" level in Literacy will meet or exceed the trend goal each year.	Secondary

Note: For purposes of assigning points for state-mandated criterion-referenced tests under the Tier II accountability component, the performance of each of the student categories - ***general population***, ***special education students***, ***limited English proficient students***, and ***high mobility students*** - shall be measured.

Tier II – School-Selected Indicators (Schools select any 5)

Indicator	Goal	Grade Level(s)
School Drop Out	Secondary schools will improve the percentage of students who stay in school to complete the 12th grade.	Secondary
Average Daily Attendance	Schools will improve their average daily attendance rate.	All Levels
Classes Taught by an Appropriately Licensed Teacher	Schools will improve the percent of classes taught by an appropriately licensed teacher.	All Levels
Professional Development	Schools will increase the percent of certified staff who complete 60 or more hours of approved professional development annually.	All Levels
School Safety	Schools will be free of drugs, weapons, and violent acts.	All Levels
Other School Selected Indicators	Schools will select trend or improvement goals directed to student achievement in specific sub-populations or sub-test areas. These must have prior approval of ADE.	All Levels

Trend and Improvement Goals on State-Mandated Criterion-Referenced Tests

On average, each school's ***trend*** goal for annual rate of reduction in the number of students below proficient will be determined by dividing the total percent of students below the proficient level by 10.

To help establish ***improvement*** goals, each cohort of students will be monitored, beginning with the 1999 Primary Benchmark Exam, and a longitudinal database developed. As students progress from grade to grade, data will be maintained and constantly updated. This information will allow for the assessment of performance changes relative to initial performance and will assist in the development of expected improvement models.

Test analysis and methodical planning to reach these goals will be facilitated and guided by the state school evaluation process.

Trend and Improvement Goals on School-Selected Indicators

The school, with approval of the ADE, selects five additional indicators to complete Tier II. These additional indicators can be selected from among school drop out, average daily attendance, teacher licensure, school safety, or professional development as defined in Tier I; OR, a school may identify trend or improvement goals directed to student achievement in specific sub-populations or sub-test areas related to the criterion-

referenced or norm-referenced tests. Guidelines will be developed for use in selecting minimum numbers of students for sub-population study in order to preclude identification of individual students. In order to protect the integrity of the accountability system, the ADE must also approve the trend and improvement goals selected by the school. If a school elects to include results of its norm-referenced tests within its Tier II indicators, points will be assigned even though no points are given for these exams in Tier I.

Note: The Professional Development indicator is set at a minimum level of 60 hours in order to encourage schools to offer more than the state-required minimum of 30 hours. Thus, schools will be rewarded for encouraging additional professional development opportunities for its teachers and administrators.

Once selected, Tier II indicators will remain until they have been substantially attained or alternate indicators approved by the ADE.

The following are examples of indicators based on sub-populations:

- ✓ The gap between the scale score in mathematics on the Primary Benchmark Exam for African-American students and white students will be decreased by 10% each year.
- ✓ Title I eligible students will improve 5 percentile points in reading comprehension each year on the fifth grade norm-referenced test.

Voluntary Reporting of Off-Grade Data

The ADE strongly encourages, and will provide assistance toward, voluntary implementation by local schools of an expansion of the process of measuring improvement goals by utilizing data for a longitudinal study of students' performance on off-grade tests. Participating schools may include results from off-grade testing as Tier II indicators, if so desired.

Tier III Indicators

Tier III is a narrative developed by the staff of each school. This annual narrative of approximately 500 words generally describes data sources (e.g., criterion-referenced tests, norm-referenced tests, etc.) used to address state and local performance indicators. The narrative also describes progress that the school has made in formulating the plan and in successfully implementing the trend and performance indicators within the school improvement process. This narrative, which shall be sent to the ADE during the spring of each year, will be incorporated in the School Performance Report that will be disseminated to the public. No points will be assigned for the narrative.

Sample School Narrative

For the last three years, scores on the Primary Benchmark Exam's reading test have exceeded the district's average. Each child from kindergarten through fifth grade receives an hour and a half of developmental reading instruction per day. Emphasis is also placed on the implementation of activities as outlined in the School Improvement Plan. Independent reading of books by primary and intermediate grade level students has been a priority – a goal was set for each student. This year 85% of the fourth grade students met or exceeded their goal compared to 70% last year. Students are being taught writing skills using many different approaches including computer word processing. The writing and scoring process is designed to help students improve writing scores on the Benchmark Exams. The computer-student ratio is 1:4. Children have access to the Internet and the school has a homepage on the Web.

In mathematics over the past five years, fifth grade students scored below the district goal of 50% above the national average on the SAT-9. This year, a staff focus group supported by a Title I supplemental grant, recommended a teacher accountability math pacing chart. It included chapter test scores, a consistent five-day math homework policy, in-service for staff and parents, a student test awareness program, homework room and a Math Intervention Assistance program. All recommendations were implemented with the approval of the school council. In May, an in-service continued to provide staff with training on computer software and accessing the Internet for mathematical teaching materials and techniques.

Parent involvement (via parent-teacher conferences) increased by 40% this year. Parents participated in developing instructional materials for use at home to reinforce skills, learning instructional uses of the computer, donated time to serve as individual tutors for students during the school day and assisted with holiday events for the students.

Definitions of Non-Academic (Learning Environment) Indicators

School Dropout means the percentage of students who leave school for any of the following reasons as defined in the Statewide Information System (SIS) database: incarcerated, failing grades, suspended or expelled, lack of interest, conflict with school, economic hardship, pregnancy/marriage, peer conflict, lack of attendance, alcohol/drugs, other. A code will be used for GED participation but will not count as a dropout for ACTAAP purposes. A student will be considered a dropout for the previous year if he/she has a Dropout/Withdrawal date between October 1 of the previous school year and October 1 of the current school year and has not re-entered. The percentage completing will be calculated by dividing the number <u>not</u> dropping out by the previous year's October 1 enrollment.

Average Daily Attendance means the total number of days attended by students divided by the number of days actually taught by the school. The number includes those students who attend school outside of the resident district on a tuition agreement between the two respective districts.

Appropriately Licensed Teacher means that a teacher has the appropriate license and/or approval to teach the respective class. The teacher is teaching a class that would not cause the school to have a citation in the accreditation process. For the purpose of this calculation, the teacher would fill one of the job assignments as defined in the SIS database. (These are instructional positions, not administrative or supervisory job classifications.) The percentage of classes taught by an appropriately licensed teacher will be determined by dividing the number of classes taught by appropriately licensed teachers by the total number of classes taught.

Professional Development is as defined in the component definition earlier.

School Safety means a percentage safety index determined by dividing the number of violent incidences involving students by the current year three-quarter average daily membership of the school and subtracting from 100%. A safety infraction committed by a student includes any of the following as defined in the SIS database: drugs, alcohol, student assault, staff assault, knife, handgun, rifle, shotgun, explosive, club, and gang. Schools reporting user-defined infractions should request confirmation from the ADE as to their inclusion in this indicator. Each reported incident will be factored into the calculation; therefore, there is no difference between one student being reported four times and four students being reported once.

Calendar for Data Collection and Point Assignment System

Since the determination of rewards and sanctions will be based on points assigned to the Tier I and Tier II indicators, it is extremely important that such a system be fair and statistically and legally defensible. It is also necessary to allow appropriate time for sufficient data to be gathered that will permit an accurate measurement of trends and improvement expectations in a sufficient number of indicators.

Once the assignment of points is initiated, the ADE, through a contract with the University of Arkansas' Office of Research, Measurement and Evaluation (ORME), will be responsible for all calculations and rankings. The local school should not need additional personnel or resources to respond to the requirements of ACTAAP.

The following calendar outlines the **Baseline Year,** or the first year in which official data for each Tier I indicator will be collected.

1998 – 99	Primary Benchmark
1999 – 00	Middle Level Benchmark
	School Dropout
	Average Daily Attendance
	Classes Taught by an Appropriately Licensed Teacher
	Professional Development
	School Safety
2000 – 01	None
2001 – 02	Intermediate Benchmark
	End-of-Course Algebra I
	End-of-Course Geometry
	End-of-Course Literacy

The Baseline Year for ***trend*** goals with each Tier II indicator will be two years following that indicator's introduction in Tier I. The Baseline Year for ***improvement*** goals will vary, depending on when the same cohort of students reaches the next appropriate, measurable indicator.

Even though baseline data accumulation was begun with the 1998-99 year, actual points for rewards and sanctions will not be assigned until 2001-02, and then only for those indicators for which sufficient data has been gathered. The complete accountability point system will become fully operational, with all indicators, in 2003-04.

Note: In order to meet federal mandates, a temporary system will be developed to identify those schools designated for school improvement. Beginning in 2000-2001 and continuing until the ACTAAP accountability system is fully operational, a school will be designated in school improvement under the following condition: Seventy-five percent or more of the students perform below proficient on either the literacy (reading and writing) or the mathematics section of the Benchmark Exam for the designated grade or grades represented by the school.

ACTAAP TIME LINE
(1995-2001)

1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
Act 915 of 1995 becomes law Direct Writing Assessment for Grades 4, 8, 11 Music and Visual Arts Frameworks written Classroom implementation of Reading, English Language Arts, and Mathematics Frameworks Final state administration of SAT8 in Grades 4, 7 and 10. Primary Benchmark Exam field tested	First state administration of SAT9 in Grades 5, 7 and 10 Theater and Dance Frameworks written Classroom implementation of Science and Foreign Language Frameworks	Primary Benchmark Exam pilot tested Middle Level Benchmark Exam development begins Classroom implementation of Social Studies, Music and Visual Arts Frameworks Health and Physical Education Frameworks written	Governor Huckabee announces Smart Start Initiative First administration of the Primary Benchmark Exam State Board sets performance standards for Primary and Middle Level Benchmark Exams State Board adopts ACTAAP English Language Arts and Mathematics Frameworks revised First Smart Start Summit held Classroom implementation of all frameworks	Act 999 of 1999 becomes law Governor Huckabee announces Smart Step Initiative Regular administration of Primary Benchmark Exam Middle Level Benchmark Exam pilot tested Intermediate Benchmark and End-of-Course Exams development begins Science and Foreign Language Curriculum Frameworks revised First Smart Step Summit held Character-Centered Teaching Conference held Alternate Portfolio Assessment for IEP and LEP students pilot tested	Regular administration of Intermediate Benchmark Exam Intermediate and End-of-Course Exams pilot tested Alternate Portfolio Assessment field tested in all districts	Visual Arts and Music Frameworks revised Regular administration of Primary, Intermediate, Middle Level, and End-of-Course Exams All districts in Alternate Portfolio Assessment State Board of Education approves performance levels for Intermediate (Grade 6) Benchmark Exam and End-of-Level exams

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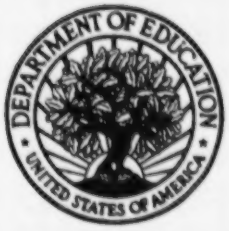

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